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Responsive to the Office Action mailed November 18, 2004, Applicant submits this Amendment and Response.

The Office Action objected to the disclosure and asked whether paragraph reference [0007] should be to the section heading "Brief Description of the Drawings." On Applicant's copy of the specification, none of the section headings have paragraph numbers and paragraph reference [0007] is on the line which begins: "The following drawings form part of the present specification ..." This is believed to be correct. Moreover, on Applicant's copy, all section headings are in all caps. Clarification is requested.

The Office Action rejected claims 1 – 2 under §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 1,178,714 (Griffin). Claims 1 and 2 are to a seal retainer. A seal retainer is defined in the specification at paragraph 0004. A seal retainer contains the seals for the female coupling member in a unit that may be easily removed and repaired without damage to the female coupling member. Griffin does not describe any sort of seal retainer. Griffin employs gaskets g which are "compressed both within and without the channel 9 of the tongue and at the angles of the shoulders 7." [lines 90-94] There is no removable carrier or retainer for gaskets g. Thus, Griffin does not anticipate the invention claimed in claims 1 – 2.

The Office Action rejected claims 1 – 4 under §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,022,262 (Gunn). Claims 1 – 3 are to a seal retainer and claim 4 is to an undersea hydraulic coupling member comprising a seal retainer. A seal retainer is defined in the specification at paragraph 0004. A seal retainer contains the seals for the female coupling member in a unit that may be easily removed and repaired without damage to the female coupling member. Gunn does not describe any sort of seal retainer. Sealing ring 18 in Gunn is simply compressed between annular nut 12 and panel 26. There is no removable carrier or retainer for this seal. Moreover claims 1 – 3 require metal blade seals and claim 4 requires metal angular seals for forming a seal between the seal retainer and a female coupling member. There are no metal seals described in Gunn. Rather, the locknut of Gunn has teeth 14 "provided with a relatively sharp axially directed end surface 16 which is capable of cutting through paint, grease or other foreign matter on the surface of the metal junction box to provide a good ground connection between the nut and the function box." [col. 2; lines 39-44]

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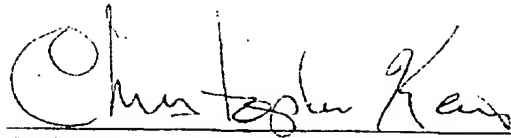
The Office Action rejected claims 1 – 2 and 4 – 8 under §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 612,455 (Gore). Claims 1 and 2 are to a seal retainer and claims 4 – 8 are to an undersea hydraulic coupling member comprising a seal retainer. A seal retainer is defined in the specification at paragraph 0004. A seal retainer contains the seals for the female coupling member in a unit that may be easily removed and repaired without damage to the female coupling member. Gore does not describe any sort of seal retainer. In Gore, continuous flexible packing ring 13 is simply placed in annular groove 6 on the face of flange 2 or “in the modification the bottom of the groove and the top of the rib are both formed with a semicircular recess to receive the packing-ring.” [lines 56-59] There is no removable element in Gore corresponding to a seal retainer. Accordingly, Gore does not anticipate the claimed invention.

The Office Action rejected claim 1 and claims 4 – 7 under §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,370,153 (Galle). Claim 1 is to a seal retainer and claims 4 – 7 are to an undersea hydraulic coupling member comprising a seal retainer. A seal retainer is defined in the specification at paragraph 0004. A seal retainer contains the seals for the female coupling member in a unit that may be easily removed and repaired without damage to the female coupling member. Galle does not describe any sort of seal retainer. Galle’s elastomeric seal 38 is not contained in a removable element but rather is simply placed in seal groove 36 on outer seal leg 20. [col. 2; lines 42-43]

The Office Action on page 6 states: “With respect to claim 4, Thomson discloses an undersea hydraulic coupling member comprising a seal retainer comprising metal angular seals (48) for forming a seal between the seal retainer and a female coupling member (12).” The only “Thomson” on the Notice of References Cited is U.S. Patent No. 2,243,265 which “relates in general to pipe couplings, and in particular the invention is directed to a coupling for concrete pipe sections or the like.” [col. 1; lines 1-4] No seal retainer is described in Thomson and there is no reference number 48. Clarification is requested.

It is submitted that since none of the cited references describes a seal retainer all the claims should be allowable. Reconsideration of the rejection is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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